



News Release
For immediate release

French-language interpretation service now available to Iqaluit's Francophone community

IQALUIT, May 11, 2021 – The Réseau Santé en français au Nunavut (RÉSEFAN) wishes to advise that a French-language interpretation service is now available to the Franco-Nunavut community during visits and consultations at Qikiqtani General Hospital and the medical clinic.

Since January 18, 2021, Ms. Christine Bérubé has been the Francophone Interpreter and Accreditation Officer at Qikiqtani General Hospital, where she serves French-speaking patients who wish to receive care in their mother tongue.

The RÉSEFAN welcomes this recruitment by the Government of Nunavut Department of Health and the work being done to provide official language services. Hiring professional interpreters is part of the ongoing work undertaken by the Department as a result of the systemic investigation into the provision of official language services at Qikiqtani General Hospital by the Office of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut.

The in-person French-language interpretation service at the hospital and medical clinic complements the simultaneous French translation service that has been provided by telephone since June 2020. Together, these two services provide Franco-Nunavut patients with full access to interpretation and translation services, which are available at all times.

These services are designed to reduce language barriers while supporting safe high-quality health care in the patient's preferred language. They are free of charge and available at all times. All patients have to do is request the service at the time of their hospital or medical clinic visit.

From the RÉSEFAN's perspective, this offer of services in French addresses two of the recommendations in the Office of the Commissioner of Languages *Final Report – If you cannot communicate with your patient, your patient is not safe*, published in October 2015, namely:

“Recommendation 8: The Department of Health should establish standards of services regarding interpretation at QGH for all hours. Interpretation/translation services should be available to patients at all times.

Recommendation 10: The Department of Health should address the need for bilingual (Inuktitut-English, French-English) workforce planning and for professional interpreter hiring. (page 49)”



Following the publication of this report, the RÉSEFAN developed the *Interpretation and Support* pilot project to support the Department of Health and the hospital in implementing these services through sharing the best practices developed by the Santé en français and Société Santé en français networks and their partners across the country.

This project included the development of the *Guide de navigation du système de santé à Iqaluit – Une présentation du Réseau Santé en français au Nunavut (RÉSEFAN)*, a collaborative initiative to implement a simultaneous telephone translation service in both French and Inuktitut (through CanTalk) and support for interpretation training of the new Francophone interpreter and accreditation officer. These are all tangible results that help increase access to health services in the patients' preferred language.

RÉSEFAN Vice-President Dorine Dounla welcomed the availability of these interpretation services to the Nunavut Francophone community: “The introduction of access to interpretation and translation services at all times at the hospital and clinic is a significant step forward in ensuring access to safe and fair services in one’s preferred language. And the recruitment of a Francophone interpreter represents yet another step toward formalizing and realigning the organization of French-language services under the legal obligations of our *Nunavut Official Languages Act*.”

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Contact:

Jérémie Roberge, Executive Director
Réseau Santé en français au Nunavut (RÉSEFAN)
Email: jroberge@resefan.ca
Phone: 867-222-2107

The RÉSEFAN is a non-profit organization dedicated to the health of Nunavut Francophones. It accomplishes its mission by promoting health and well-being and supporting access to health services adapted to the language and cultural diversity of Nunavut’s Francophone community. The RÉSEFAN is a member of the Société Santé en français. For more information, please refer to: www.resefan.ca/en/resefan.